

# The Scuttlebutt Chronicles

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**VSO Quarterly Newsletter**

**Volume No. 14, April, May , June 2022**

# Veterans Services Team Member

Celestina was born in Redding California and raised on her family's ranch by a WWII Master Sargent in Igo California. She was an active participant of 4-H, Volleyball, softball, and soccer in her youth. After high school, Celestina took 1 year of Administration of Justice at Shasta College. Always wanting to travel and experience other cultures, she decided to join the US Army. She attended boot camp in Ft McClellan Alabama. As a Military Police Officer and served her time in Germany. Celestina was present during the fall of the East Berlin wall and the start of the Gulf War. Her time in the military allotted her the opportunity to grow up and figure out what she wanted to do in her life.

Celestina began her career with Shasta County in 2010 as extra help with Veterans Services. Full time in 2012, she rose quickly in the ranks to now serve as the first female Veterans Services Officer in Shasta County history.

She works daily to continue to create a safe space for veterans to come to file their federal claims. She continues to have a team of VSR's that are educated on the latest federal law and are fully accredited to file these claims. She works diligently to expand services to minority and underrepresented Veterans. She serves actively in her community and within Veterans organizations. She serves on many committees, boards, and belongs to many organizations.

Celestina was blessed with 3 Children and 1 Stepchild. Together with her husband George, they are the grandparents of 5! Her hobbies include spending time traveling with her family and friends and expanding her flower garden or enjoying time on the beach.

Celestina won the *CalVet Trailblazer of the year award for 202* and was recently published in "Women Veterans magazine California 2022 Edition." In 2022, she was asked to be chair for the newly named *CACVSO Minority and Woman's committee*.



**Celestina Traver**  
**Veterans Services Officer**

**\*Employee Spotlight\***

# DID YOU KNOW



## COLLEGE FEE WAIVER CHANGES

The College Fee Waiver for Veteran Dependents benefit waives mandatory system-wide tuition and fees at any State of California Community College, California State University, or University of California campus. This program does not cover the expense of books, parking or room and board. There are four plans under which dependents of Veterans may be eligible.

For eligibility information, please review the information for each Plan. In accordance with California Education Code 66025.3(c), the income limit for otherwise eligible students under Plan B for the school academic year 2021-22 is \$13,465.

**UPDATE: Income limit for the upcoming academic year 2022-23 is \$14,097**



While there are roughly 2 million living women Veterans, only **80,000** are currently enrolled in VA's [Million Veteran Program \(MVP\)](#).

During Women's History Month, we invite women to make history in medicine by enrolling in MVP.

[Join MVP from the comfort of your home](#)

The Million Veteran Program (MVP) is a national research program to learn how genes, lifestyle, and military exposures affect health and illness.

Since launching in 2011, over 850,000 Veterans have joined MVP, making it one of the world's largest programs on genetics and health.

## VAntage Point

While everyone is looking forward to the end of the COVID-19 pandemic, Pittsburgh VA clinicians have their eye on a long-term issue with the disease – a health condition known as “long COVID.” In January, Pittsburgh VA opened a clinic for Veterans who have recovered from the acute stage of COVID but who continue to have debilitating symptoms of the disease.

Ten to 30 percent of patients who have recovered from COVID-19 report new, returning or worsened symptoms known as post-COVID conditions, according to team member Dr. Erika Hoffman. The broad range of lingering symptoms includes sleep loss, heart and lung issues and trouble with mental processes such as thinking, learning, problem-solving and memory.

“Many have multifaceted health issues and worsened quality of life,” said Hoffman.

### *Each Veteran gets personalized treatment program*

Some Veterans have rare symptoms, such as hair loss and profound fatigue after minimal mental or physical effort, said team member Dr. Anjali Das. Because no two patients present the same symptoms of post-COVID, the team provides each Veteran with a personalized treatment program and three-month follow-up.

The clinic’s multidisciplinary team includes physicians, psychologists, nurses, physical therapists, social workers, researchers, and hearing and speech specialists. They take a team approach to treating Veterans, addressing psychological, physical and mental health needs.

Psychologist Austin Brown assesses Veterans for mental health and cognitive symptoms that can overlap and contribute to long-term recovery. Many Veterans with post-COVID conditions need help with the depression, fear, anxiety and even weight gain that can come with a long-term, debilitating illness.

“This assessment helps to ensure that every aspect of the Veteran’s well-being is considered in the treatment recommendations created by the team,” said Brown.

Physical therapy’s role includes helping Veterans who have lung damage from COVID. They can instruct Veterans who are easily winded, for instance, on therapeutic exercises to perform at home. Social workers help Veterans identify stressors and challenges. They also help Veterans find VA and community resources to help them deal not only with their symptoms, but also with financial concerns, housing and food insecurity.

### *Many patients did not get or complete vaccinations*

Das said the clinic will remain if there is a need, but she reiterated the best way to prevent post-COVID conditions is to prevent COVID-19 illness in the first place.

“Many of the patients we have seen did not get or complete their series of COVID vaccinations,” she said.

In addition to clinical care, the team is gathering information on post-COVID conditions for research.

“We plan to create a registry and data repository that will provide a mechanism to store data, support the conduct of future research about long COVID, and foster collaborations with both VA and non-VA facilities, such as the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center,” said team member Dr. Lynn Baniak, associate chief nurse for research.

To be seen in the clinic, Veterans should ask their primary care provider for a referral.



*Introducing . . .*

*The **newly appointed** CACVSO Women & Minority*



*Veterans Committee Chair, Celestina Traver*

**APRIL:**

<https://www.womenveteransalliance.org/events/month/2022-04/>

[Women Veterans Program Monthly Virtual WV Network](#) - Facebook Live

Apr 14, 2022 1:30 PM - 2:00 PM (CST)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEtduCqqTsqHtX3gstFcjXtr-UAeNSNLI8e>

**MAY:**

<https://www.womenveteransalliance.org/events/month/2022-05/>

[Women Veterans Program Monthly Virtual WV Network](#) - Facebook Live

May 12, 2022 1:30 PM - 2:00 PM (CST)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEtduCqqTsqHtX3gstFcjXtr-UAeNSNLI8e>

**JUNE:**

<https://www.womenveteransalliance.org/events/month/2022-06/>

[Women Veterans Program Monthly Virtual WV Network](#) - Facebook Live

Jun 9, 2022 1:30 PM - 2:00 PM (CST)

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEtduCqqTsqHtX3gstFcjXtr-UAeNSNLI8e>

**Xóchitl Rodríguez Murillo,  
Deputy Secretary,  
Minority Veterans Affairs -  
Masters of Ceremony**



**Xóchitl Rodríguez Murillo was appointed on October 8, 2019 by Governor Gavin Newsom as Deputy Secretary for Minority and Underrepresented Veterans at the California Department of Veterans Affairs. She serves as Councilmember to the City of Woodland since 2016 and as a Sergeant in the U.S. Army Reserve since 2012. She deployed with the Army from 2004-2005 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and received the National Defense Service Medal, Armed Forces Reserve Medal with M Device and Global War on Terrorism medals (expeditionary and service).**

**Xóchitl previously served as Mayor to the City of Woodland from 2018 to 2019. She served the California State Legislature from 2008 to 2019 under different capacities, as Appointments Consultant to Speaker Rendon from 2018 to 2019, Legislative Aide to Assembly member Caballero from 2017 to 2018, Member Consultant to Speaker Atkins in 2016, Clerk to the Secretary of the Senate in 2016, Field Representative to Assembly member Santiago from 2014 to 2016, Assistant to Speaker Pérez from 2012 to 2014 and Daily File Clerk to the Assembly Chief Clerk from 2008 to 2012.**

**Xóchitl holds a B.A. in International Relations and Spanish from the University of California, Davis and an M.A. in Spanish from the California State University, Sacramento. She is a member of the American Legion Yolo Post 77, Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1985, California Latino Capitol Association Foundation and the University of California, Davis Cal Aggie Alumni Association. She currently resides in Woodland with her husband Antonio.**



# SAVE THE DATES

APRIL 2022



LEARN MORE [VAEDl.com/event/April-Financial-Classes](https://VAEDl.com/event/April-Financial-Classes)



## APRIL IS FINANCIAL LITERACY MONTH

— VA IS HOSTING FIVE UNIQUE FINANCIAL CLASSES —

**APRIL 6**

### Investing in the Digital Age

Presented by:  
U.S. Securities and  
Exchange Commission (SEC)

This 90-minute class will be  
offered twice. [Register](#)  
12 p.m. EST and 3 p.m. EST

**APRIL 13**

### Destination: Financial Wellness

Presented by:  
BC Holdings of Tennessee

This 60-minute class will be  
offered twice. [Register](#)  
12 p.m. EST and 5 p.m. EST

**APRIL 20**

### Your Social Security Benefits

Presented by:  
Prudential Financial

This 60-minute class will be  
offered twice. [Register](#)  
12 p.m. EST and 3 p.m. EST

**APRIL 27**

### Understanding Credit Reports and Scores

Presented by:  
Federal Deposit Insurance  
Corporation (FDIC)

This 60-minute class will be  
offered once. [Register](#)  
12 p.m. EST

**APRIL 27**

### Protect Yourself from Fraud and Scams

Presented by:  
Consumer Finance  
Protection Bureau (CFPB)

This 60-minute class will be  
offered once. [Register](#)  
3 p.m. EST

New live classes  
are offered every

**3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday**

OF THE MONTH

THANK YOU TO OUR STRATEGIC PARTNERS





## How to Avoid Prescription Refill Mistakes

*Best steps to use when refilling your VA prescription*

Millions of Veterans manage their VA prescription refills with My HealtheVet. In fact, over 16 million prescription refills were already completed this year. If yours is one of them, it's okay if you've gotten confused a time or two. Better navigate the pharmacy section of your account by avoiding these common hiccups.

### What is the fill date?

When you visit the [Refill VA Prescriptions](#) section under **Pharmacy**, you will find a table of your refillable prescription medications. This table's column titles can leave you wondering, "what's that?" The most common section Veterans ask about is the **Fill Date**. It refers to the date after which the VA Pharmacy processes the refill request. This means your prescriptions will not be filled until the **Fill Date**. Your refill requests should be made at least 15 days before running out of your prescription.

### How far back can I track?

Once you submit a request to refill a VA prescription, tracking information is available after it's shipped from the VA Mail Order Pharmacy. Refills shipped from a local VA medical center cannot be tracked at this time. Once your refill has been sent, and carrier tracking information is available, a blue "Track Delivery" button will appear in the **VA Prescription Tracking** column. Click this button to view your delivery status. Your shipment information will be available for 30 days. Generally, you can expect to receive your prescriptions 3 to 5 days after being shipped.


You can also receive email notifications of when your prescription refills are shipped. Go to the **Personal Information** section in the navigation bar and select [My Profile](#). There you can opt-in to receive **Rx Refill Shipment Notifications**.

### Are these all my prescriptions?

Most of your refillable prescriptions are available in the **Refill VA Prescriptions** section of [Pharmacy](#). However, not all of your medications may be listed.

If you have refillable prescriptions that are not shown, contact the pharmacy staff at the VA facility that prescribed your medication. You can find the phone number on the label of your prescription bottle.

### Renewal or refill?

The number of refills you have for each VA prescription can be found in the **Refill Remaining** column of your medications table. If your prescription is not available for a refill, you will see an "i"  image in that column. If you have questions about this prescription, don't hesitate to contact your local VA pharmacy. If you have no refills left but are still expected to continue taking the medication, then you should contact your health care team to request a medication 'renewal.' This also applies to prescriptions that are expired or discontinued. You can ask for a prescription renewal by phone, during your virtual VA health care appointment, or with [Secure Messaging](#) (sign in required).





## Veteran's Housing Assistance Grants

There are **2 types** of grants for disabled Veterans- SAH & SHA

### Specially Adapted Housing grant

You may be able to get an SAH grant if you're using the grant money to buy, build, or change your permanent home (a home you plan to live in for a long time) and you meet both of these requirements.

#### Both of these must be true:

- You own or will own the home, **and**
- You have a qualifying service-connected disability

#### Qualifying service-connected disabilities include:

- The loss or loss of use of more than one limb
- The loss or loss of use of a lower leg along with the residuals (lasting effects) of an organic (natural) disease or injury
- Blindness in both eyes (with 20/200 visual acuity or less)
- Certain severe burns
- The loss, or loss of use, of one lower extremity (foot or leg) after September 11, 2001, which makes it so you can't balance or walk without the help of braces, crutches, canes, or a wheelchair

**Note:** Only 120 Veterans and service members each fiscal year (FY) can qualify for a grant based on the loss of one extremity after September 11, 2001, as set by Congress. A fiscal year runs from October 1 through September 30. If you qualify for, but don't receive, a grant in the current fiscal year because the cap has already been reached, you may be able to use this benefit in future years.

### Special Home Adaptation (SHA) grant

You may be able to get an SHA grant if you're using the grant money to buy, build, or change your permanent home (a home you plan to live in for a long time) and you meet both of these requirements.

#### Both of these must be true:

- You or a family member own or will own the home, **and**
- You have a qualifying service-connected disability

#### Qualifying service-connected disabilities include:

- The loss or loss of use of both hands
- Certain severe burns
- Certain respiratory or breathing injuries

#### How much funding does an SHA offer?

If you qualify for an SHA grant, you can get up to **\$20,387** for FY 2022. This is the current total maximum amount allowed for SHA grants.



# VA Plans to drop thousands of caregivers from Veterans Affairs program put on hold

Veterans Affairs officials announced Tuesday that all expulsions from the department's caregiver support program will be halted while officials re-evaluate new eligibility criteria that threatened monthly support stipends for thousands of families.

But following significant criticism from advocates saying that the changes were unfair and endangered veterans' financial well-being, officials reversed course and promised not to drop any program participants for the time being.

"There are veterans with moderate to severe care needs who are unable to be admitted into the program or remain in the program, as the regulations currently stand. That's simply not what we want. That's not what the veterans and caregivers need from us."

## About 33,000 families are currently enrolled in the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers.

Initially the program was open only to post-9/11 veterans, but in 2018 Congress approved expansion to other generations as well. Individuals who served before May 1975 were admitted starting in fall 2020, and all remaining veterans will be eligible starting fall 2022.

While the program offers a series of legal and support services to families, the most prominent benefit is the monthly caregiver stipend.

Currently, a full-time caregiver tending to a veteran who is "unable to self-sustain in the community" can receive the full monthly stipend, while a caretaker for a vet with lesser but still life-altering limitations can receive a partial payment.

The totals vary based on where veterans live, but generally hover about \$3,000 a month for the full Level 2 stipend and \$1,800 for the partial Level 1 stipend. In 2020, when the Vietnam-era veterans were admitted to the program, VA officials announced changes to eligibility criteria focused on whether veterans can perform "activities of daily living

VA officials had promised to keep paying benefits through 2022 to families leaving the program, to give them time to adjust to the lost income. But advocates said that for families with loved ones in need of constant care, the extra time would not provide anything more than a deadline for when their financial problems would begin.



# FREE PLACEMENT ASSISTANCE

GUARD, RESERVE, POST 9/11 VETERANS, SPOUSES AND GOLD STAR FAMILIES



AN EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVE OF



STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
MILITARY DEPARTMENT

HELPING CALIFORNIA'S HEROES GET HIRED<sup>SM</sup>



Work for Warriors (WFW) is a State and Federally funded Direct Placement Program within California. WFW is open to all currently serving California National Guard, DoD Reserve, Post 9/11 Veterans, Spouses and Gold Star Families.

FOLLOW US ON  
SOCIAL MEDIA!

#WORKFORWARRIORS



/TeamWFW



/Work for Warriors

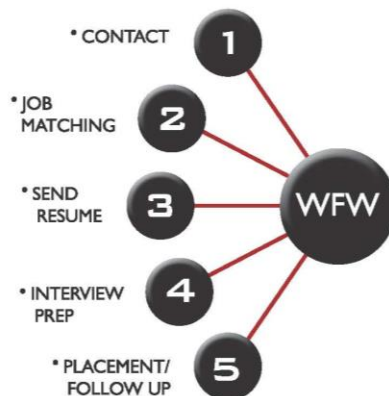


/Team\_WFW



/Work for Warriors

## 5 STEP PROCESS



[WWW.WORKFORWARRIORS.ORG](http://WWW.WORKFORWARRIORS.ORG)

Office: 916.854.4426 Email: [apply@workforwarriors.org](mailto:apply@workforwarriors.org)





## Veterans Affairs Dental Insurance Program

We proudly offer quality dental care for Veterans and CHAMPVA beneficiaries. A dental plan helps you keep your teeth and gums healthy and minimizes the impact of unexpected expenses. Choose between three plans to best fit your needs.

### Benefits available upon enrollment

Benefits	Enhanced Plan		Comprehensive Plan		Prime Plan	
	In-network	Out-of-network	In-network	Out-of-network	In-network	Out-of-network
Diagnostic and preventive <sup>1</sup> Routine cleanings, x-rays, oral exams, sealants	100%	80%	100%	80%	100%	90%
Basic restorative Fillings (silver)	50%	30%	60%	40%	70%	60%
Simple extractions <sup>2,3</sup>	50%	30%	50%	30%	50%	40%
General services	NAB	NAB	50%	30%	50%	40%

Enhanced: \$ 26.05 monthly

Comprehensive: \$45.16 monthly

Prime: \$56.41 monthly

<https://www1.deltadentalins.com/federal/vadip.html>



# Chicken Andouille-Stuffed Peppers with Roasted Green Beans

*Bon  
Appetit!*

## Ingredients:

- 2 red and/or yellow sweet peppers, halved lengthwise and seeded
- 1 8.8 ounce pouch cooked whole grain brown rice
- 6 ounces cooked chicken andouille sausage, chopped
- ½ cup sliced green onions
- ⅓ cup seeded and chopped roma tomato
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon Cajun seasoning
- 1 pound green beans, trimmed
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- ¼ teaspoon salt and pepper
- ½ cup shredded Colby and Monterey Jack cheese (2 oz.) (optional)

## Directions:

Preheat oven to 425°F. Place peppers, cut sides down, in a 15x10-inch baking pan. Roast 10 minutes.

Meanwhile, in a medium bowl combine next six ingredients (through Cajun seasoning).

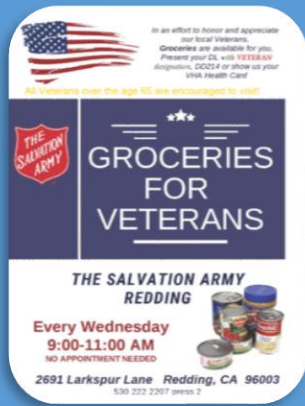
Turn over pepper halves and arrange in half of the pan. Fill with sausage mixture, allowing some filling to spill into pan if necessary. Place green beans in the other half of pan.

Drizzle beans with oil and sprinkle with salt and black pepper; toss to coat.

Cover loosely with foil and roast 25 minutes. Remove foil. If desired, sprinkle peppers with cheese. Roast 5 minutes more or until filling is heated through and beans are tender.



# VSO Partnerships



Shasta County  
Health & Human  
Services Agency



# EVENTS

## April:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Schreder Planetarium- ET Night
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Farmers Market- Cypress Street, Redding
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Hops and Shops Downtown 2pm
- 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Redding Sportsman Expo- Civic Center
- 15<sup>th</sup> Shasta Speedway Monster Trucks 7pm
- 23<sup>rd</sup> Squirrel Hunt

## May

- 4<sup>th</sup> Ladies Night Out 5pm-10 Cottonwood Rodeo Weekend
- 12<sup>th</sup> Vine & Dine for Parks Redding City Hall 5:30-8pm
- 14<sup>th</sup> Fire Festival 2pm-Shasta District Fair
- 14<sup>th</sup> Anderson VFW Show and Shine 7am-3pm
- 15<sup>th</sup> Celtic Woman – Civic Center
- 20<sup>th</sup> 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Chicks N Chaps /Breast Cancer Redding Rodeo 10am
- 21<sup>st</sup> Zombie Pub Crawl 7pm IOOF Hall, Redding
- 28<sup>th</sup> Renaissance and Fantasy Faire @ Shasta Fair Grounds 10am
- 28<sup>th</sup> Happy Valley Strawberry Festival 7am-5pm
- 30<sup>th</sup> Memorial Day Event-Veterans Grove from 11am-12pm Call Veterans Services 530-225-5616 to RSVP your group/organization

## June

- 1<sup>st</sup> ZZ Top – Civic Center
- 12<sup>th</sup> Taste of Redding – City of Redding-Rotary Club
- 18<sup>th</sup> Sundial Splash 2022 10am
- 18<sup>th</sup> Nick Dahl Gold Tournament / BBQ Palo Cedro 8am

**For Show and Shine Information:** Please visit  
[www.shastaclassicscarclub.com/calendar-2022/](http://www.shastaclassicscarclub.com/calendar-2022/)  
[www.shastacruising.com](http://www.shastacruising.com)  
[www.koolaprilnites.com](http://www.koolaprilnites.com)





Reminder- we are  
at the Salvation  
Army EVERY  
Wednesday  
9am-11am



Honoring Women  
Veterans in the Military  
Month



Always serving her  
community



Honoring Vietnam Vets at BOS



Happy 100<sup>th</sup>!  
Thank you for your service



Greetings All

We continue to be open serving Veterans in Shasta County. Veterans Services has a great team of Vet Reps that are standing-by to answer your questions regarding service connection disabilities, presumptive conditions, and the newest changes in federal law. Our Veterans Services Representatives are fully accredited and hold an Office of General Counsel Accreditation Number. This means that we have access to the federal computer system to follow your claim and have access to direct submit from our computer to theirs. This allows more effective and efficient claims work. My goal is to make sure all Veterans and their widows know about their federal and state benefits. I invite anyone who has never been in to come meet the staff and let us honor you.



**Celestina Traver**  
Veterans Services Officer



**Troy Payne**  
Veterans Service Representative  
tpayne@co.shasta.ca.us



**Amy Hancock**  
Administrative Secretary



**Nora Smith (STILL HERE!)**  
Veterans Service Representative  
nlsmith@co.shasta.ca.us



**Tarah Adner**  
Office Assistant



**Victoria O'Callaghan**  
Veterans Service Representative  
vocallaghan@co.shasta.ca.us



**Danny Boyer**  
Veterans Service Representative  
dboyer@co.shasta.ca.us



**Fred Loveland**  
Shasta County Veterans  
Remains Officer

**Coming Soon.....**



**Brian Diederich**  
Veterans Service Representative

**facebook**

**Shasta County  
Veteran Services Office**

Office: 530-225-5616 Option #2

**Visit our webpage for printable checklists.**

**[vso@co.shasta.ca.us](mailto:vso@co.shasta.ca.us)**